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NARRATIVES FROM THE WAR

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

A Polish legion has been formed in France. The uniform is Roumanian blue, with the old time square cap, and—at last—their own one-headed eagle, the national emblem that has been so long strictly forbidden. A raspberry colored brassard with a white one-headed eagle is worn on the arm.

The 1914 Bronze Star has been presented to two nursing sisters of No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital in France. This was the first Canadian unit to reach France after war was declared, embarking in November, 1914. Twenty-four noncommissioned officers and men also were decorated. The members of the staff thus honored are all that is left of the original hospital staff. The 1914 Star is awarded only to those who served in France between August 4th and November 22nd, 1914. The general body of Canadians was not then in France.

After every battle, salvage lorries go over the battlefields and bring in everything they can pick up. At Calais, 25,000 pairs of shoes are remade every week after they have been brought in from the scene of conflict. Uniforms are made over and every bit of salvage is utilized in some way, so that nothing is wasted.

The American troops in the trenches were victorious in their first encounter on a large scale with the enemy. The German attack was a sudden one and a heavy barrage along a front of several kilometres cut off the Americans. They responded with vigor, their 75's tore up the German front trenches, blew up several of their dugouts and cut their barbed wire entanglements, causing damage which it would take some time to repair. Little harm was done the American position. The enemy received an overpowering bombardment at this initial point of assault, which later was extended over a wide region. The first experience of our troops in the trenches was in Lorraine. When the German barrage began, a corporal, carrying out previous instructions, ordered two privates who were stationed in an advanced listening post to retire to the main trenches. Soon afterward the corporal was killed and one of the privates, John W. Hill, refused to go back to a safer place. "I'll stick here," he called out. Reconnoitering parties found blood stains on the ground about the listening post and a German rifle and two grenades lying near by. It is supposed that Hill was taken prisoner. Private George Ashburn of Clark Range, Tennessee, was the first American wounded when his regiment entered the trenches for instruction last October. Sergeant Joseph

Enderling was cited in the French order of the day for gallantry in leading patrols to the enemy's barbed wire on several occasions and gaining information valuable for future operations. Both these men were decorated with French war crosses. When the colonel of their regiment pinned them on their breasts he said that he and his command were honored by having two of his men thus highly praised by the French army. Asburn and Enderling's citations will be recorded in the regimental archives.

A twelve-inch gun disposes of a half bale of cotton with every shot fired; a machine gun in operation uses up a bale in three minutes. In a naval battle like the one off Jutland, over 5000 pounds a minute are consumed by each active warship. More than 20,000 bales a year are needed to provide absorbent cotton for the wounds of the injured. A million bales are necessary to provide one change of clothing for all the troops now engaged in the war.

The soldiers on board the *Tuscania*, the first American transport to be sunk by the Germans, displayed the greatest coolness when the vessel was torpedoed. Each man went to his appointed post and there was no confusion. They were approaching the Irish coast and the men were preparing their kits, laughing and joking, for disembarkation after the 3000 miles voyage. Although they were not veterans from Flanders, they met the test without a quiver and with no trace of panic or disturbance. One hundred and forty-three men and four officers perished, but the remainder, over 2000, was saved, either in the ship's boats, or by the British destroyers. It is believed that German spies revealed the time of sailing of the *Tuscania* and the route she was to take. It is thought that the submarine that attacked her was destroyed by depth bombs from the destroyers. The United States Marine recruiting station in New York was immediately swamped by recruits as a direct result of the sinking.

"Poilu" in the French dictionary means hairy, shaggy, bristling. The name was given to French soldiers who have served in the trenches because the first French soldiers on leave thronged into Paris wearing whiskers. Such a sight had never been seen before and the people cried, "Oh, les poilus," which may be freely translated, "Oh! the whiskers," and the name stuck.

The bodies of the American soldiers drowned in the torpedoing of the *Tuscania* were buried on the Scottish shore near where the disaster took place. No American flag was to be obtained for the ceremony. A number of Scotch women procured a small silk pocket handkerchief edition of the flag and sat up all night to make a large sized one, that the strangers might not lack at their burial the flag for which they gave their lives.